

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1-42. (Cancelled)

43. (Previously Presented) A recombinant vector comprising:

(A) lactic acid bacterial DNA;

(B) a gene coding for an amber suppressor that is a tRNA comprising the CUA anticodon; and

(C) a replicon making said vector capable of replicating in a lactic acid bacterium, wherein (a) said gene is (i) obtained from the chromosome of a lactic acid bacterium and (ii) under the control of a regulatable promoter, and (b) said vector lacks a gene coding for antibiotic resistance.

44. (Previously Presented) The vector according to claim 43, wherein said regulatable promoter is a heterologous promoter.

45. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vector comprising:

(A) lactic acid bacterial DNA;

(B) a gene coding for an amber suppressor that is a tRNA comprising the CUA anticodon; and

(C) a replicon making said vector capable of replicating in a lactic acid bacterium, wherein (a) said suppressor results from [at least one change, preferably] two or three changes[[,]] of nucleotide in [said] the anticodon region of a gene encoding a tRNA, and (b) said vector lacks a gene coding for antibiotic resistance.

46. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vector that is selected from a group consisting of [pFG 100] pFG100 deposited under the accession No. DSM 12091, and pFG200 deposited under the accession No. DSM 12108.

47. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vector comprising:
(A) lactic acid bacterial DNA;
(B) a first gene coding for an amber suppressor that is a tRNA comprising the CUA anticodon;
(C) a replicon making said vector capable of replicating in a lactic acid bacterium;
(D) a second gene coding for a desired gene product,
wherein (a) said vector lacks a gene coding for antibiotic resistance, and (b) said gene product confers [**bacteriophage**] **bacteriophage** resistance to a lactic acid bacterial host cell.

48. (Previously Presented) A recombinant vector comprising:
(A) lactic acid bacterial DNA;
(B) a first gene coding for an amber suppressor that is a tRNA comprising the CUA anticodon;
(C) a replicon making said vector capable of replicating in a lactic acid bacterium;
(D) a second gene coding for a desired gene product,
wherein (a) said vector lacks a gene coding for antibiotic resistance, and (b) said gene product is a bacteriophage lysin.

49. (Currently Amended) The vector according to claim 48, wherein the gene coding for said bacteriophage [**lysine**] **lysine** is obtained from the bacteriophage ØvML3 as contained in DN209/pFG7 deposited under the accession No. DSM 12089.

50. (Currently Amended) A recombinant vector comprising:
(A) lactic acid bacterial DNA;
(B) a first gene coding for an amber suppressor that is a tRNA comprising the CUA anticodon;
(C) a replicon making said vector capable of replicating in a lactic acid bacterium;
(D) a second gene coding for a desired gene product,
wherein (a) said vector lacks a gene coding for antibiotic resistance[[,]] and (b) said gene product is [a part of] **involved in** the nisin synthesis pathway or **in** nisin resistance.

51. (Currently Amended) A lactic acid bacterium comprising a recombinant vector, wherein said vector comprising:

- (A) lactic acid bacterial DNA;
- (B) a gene coding for an amber suppressor that is a tRNA comprising the CUA anticodon; and
- (C) a replicon making said vector capable of replicating in a lactic acid bacterium, wherein (a) said vector lacks a gene coding for antibiotic resistance, (b) said suppressor suppresses a nonsense mutation (i) that confers auxotrophy in the [abence] **absence** of a nonsense suppressor capable of suppressing the mutation, and (ii) that is in a gene involved in the synthesis of pyrimidine nucleotides.

52. (Previously Presented) The lactic acid bacterium according to claim 51, wherein said nonsense mutation is in a *pyr* gene.

53. (Currently Amended) A lactic acid bacterium [(i)] that is *Lactococcus lactis* subsp. *lactis* strain FA4-1-1 containing pFG100, deposited under the accession No. DSM 12091 or *Lactococcus lactis* subsp. *lactis* strain CHCC4146 containing pFG200, deposited under the accession No. DSM 12108[, and (ii) that comprises a recombinant vector, wherein said vector comprises:

- (A) lactic acid bacterial DNA;
- (B) a gene coding for an amber suppressor that is a tRNA comprising the CUA anticodon; and
- (C) a replicon making said vector capable of replicating in a lactic acid bacterium, wherein said vector lacks a gene coding for antibiotic resistance].

54. (Cancelled)

55. (Currently Amended) A method for stably maintaining a recombinant vector in lactic acid bacterial host cells, growing in a particular environment, which method comprises:

- (A) providing [**nonsense**] mutant cells that are auxotrophic lactic acid bacterial cells, which cannot grow in said environment and which carry a [**pyr mutation**] **nonsense mutation in a *pyr* gene**; and
- (B) producing said host cells by transforming said nonsense mutant cells with a vector that lacks a gene coding for antibiotic resistance and that comprises (i) lactic acid bacterial DNA, (ii) a gene coding for an amber suppressor that is a tRNA comprising the CUA anticodon, and (iii) a replicon that makes said vector capable of replicating in a lactic acid bacterium, such that said host cells do not grow if they lose said vector.

56. (New) A lactic acid bacterium comprising a vector according to claim 43.
57. (New) A lactic acid bacterium comprising a vector according to claim 45.
58. (New) A lactic acid bacterium comprising a vector according to claim 47.
59. (New) A lactic acid bacterium comprising a vector according to claim 49.
60. (New) A lactic acid bacterium comprising a vector according to claim 50.
61. (New) An isolated pure culture of a lactic acid bacterium according to claim 56.
62. (New) An isolated pure culture of a lactic acid bacterium according to claim 57.
63. (New) An isolated pure culture of a lactic acid bacterium according to claim 58.
64. (New) An isolated pure culture of a lactic acid bacterium according to claim 59.

65. (New) An isolated pure culture of a lactic acid bacterium according to claim 60.
66. (New) A composition comprising (i) an isolated pure culture of a lactic acid bacterium as defined in claim 61 and (ii) a carrier.
67. (New) A composition comprising (i) an isolated pure culture of a lactic acid bacterium as defined in claim 62 and (ii) a carrier.
68. (New) A composition comprising (i) an isolated pure culture of a lactic acid bacterium as defined in claim 63 and (ii) a carrier.
69. (New) A composition comprising (i) an isolated pure culture of a lactic acid bacterium as defined in claim 64 and (ii) a carrier.
70. (New) A composition comprising (i) an isolated pure culture of a lactic acid bacterium as defined in claim 65 and (ii) a carrier.